

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

HTTP://www.dfg.ca.gov
Wildlife Programs Branch
1812 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone (916) 445-3406



November 4, 2002

To all interested parties:

The following information is being provided to you because you have expressed interest in wild turkey management conducted by the Department of Fish and Game (Department). It provides a brief summary of actions the Department intends to undertake during the next several months.

The Department is moving forward with a process to develop a comprehensive statewide management plan for California's growing wild turkey population. The Department will use the plan development process to construct viable management strategies that will help resolve problems arising from growing numbers of wild turkeys in areas where they are not wanted, while maintaining population levels that will maximize hunting and viewing opportunities. A draft of the plan will be developed in the next year.

The Department's decision to prepare a new statewide management plan came following public review of a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) completed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act addressing a proposal to release turkeys at six sites in northern California. The draft EIR was released in February 2002. Comments received during the review period for the draft EIR, as well as the Department's own internal review of the document, demonstrated the need for a comprehensive turkey management plan that more fully addresses the broader issues associated with the management of wild turkeys throughout California.

Wild turkeys are well established in a number of locations in California. In recent years, concerns about the potential impacts non-native wild turkeys might have on native plants and animals have increased significantly. This concern, fueled in part by scientific information about the negative effects that other non-native species are having on the environment, has prompted the Department to take a closer look at the issues associated with turkeys.

Although wild turkeys were present in California during the Pleistocene Era, they became extinct at least 10,000 years ago. Turkeys are therefore not considered native to any part of modern day California because they did not evolve with much of the state's current biota. Native or not, turkeys are considered to be a resident game bird (Fish and Game Code (FGC) Section 3500) and as such are

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managed by the Department pursuant to FGC Section 1801. Turkeys are highly valued by many for the hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities they provide and the Department considers them to be an important part of its wildlife management responsibilities.

Information and public input gathered during the development of the draft EIR will be used in developing the management plan. Public meetings will be held in late February and early March around the state to gather additional input in developing the management plan. You can keep informed about meeting dates and other updates regarding development of the plan by checking the Department's website, at **www.dfg.ca.gov**.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Sonke Mastrup, Deputy Director
Wildlife and Inland Fisheries Division